

Testimony in support of HB 6759

Submitted By:

Kim Hagan

Good afternoon Sen. McCrory, Rep. Curry, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Kim Hagan. I live in Colchester and School Age Director.

I am testifying in support of HB 6759 An Act Concerning Early Childhood. I want to thank you for recognizing in section 1 of this bill that compensation for early educators is the issue facing the early care and education sector. Implementing the OEC Compensation Scale would finally pay early educators wages comparable to public school staff with the same degrees.

This is an issue that is very important to me. Working in childcare and receiving lower than cost of living wages has made it extremely difficult to secure quality staff members and have a low turn over rate. Our staff barely make enough to support themselves without having to work a second job. We are not able to secure qualified candidates for open positions within our program. Our staff are over worked and underpaid and we are losing our staff to other higher paying professions. At some point we will not have anyone who is truly passionate about working with children actually working with them. If wages were on a more level playing field I truly believe that we would once again see qualified and passionate people working in this field.

What is missing from this bill is how it will be paid for. I urge you to support increasing payments to the state funded early care programs and the creation of a wage equity fund similar to what was created in Washington DC to increase wages for early educators without adding to the child care cost burden that families already face.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions.